

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/diane-tucker/exclusive-russian-human-r b 208622.html>

"It's time to bring the issue of racism and human rights to the high-level desks and deal with the problem together," Innokenty Grekov told Huffington Post. Innokenty works for the Fighting Discrimination Program at Human Rights First. "I'd like to see the United States and the Russian Federation sharing best practices, bringing Russian law enforcement officials to the U.S. to see how the system works here, and demonstrating how to prosecute these cases properly."

In fact, anti-discrimination legislation "practically doesn't exist in Russia because the problem of discrimination is almost never discussed," explained Verkhovsky. In addition to racial discrimination, problems for religious minorities are growing. The **U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom** just added Russia to its watch list.

Solving these problems will not be easy in a country where it is estimated that up to one in two government transactions involves a bribe, and where nationalism runs deep. But President Obama could help the U.S. regain a measure of its moral authority in the eyes of the international community by at least adding "discuss human rights initiatives" to the summit agenda.